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Spring 2015

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Greetings!

Greetings to JALT Vocabulary SIG members. This is an uplifting time of year and we hope that this edition of VERB can contribute to a new academic year of teaching and research. We would also like to take this chance to introduce ourselves as the new co-editors of VERB, taking over from Tomoko Ishii and TJ Boutorwick. We are very happy to be involved in this publication, and over the past few months have been particularly impressed by seeing first-hand the amount of work that is being done behind the scenes – especially by our reviewers, who cannot be thanked enough. This time we also have a new copy editor, Steven Porritt, whose help has been invaluable. And the issue would not exist without the contributors, who not only took the time to research and write their articles, but also stayed in touch with us throughout review and editing stages.

In this first issue of ours, **Alex Cameron** starts us out with a test of his Cross-Prime app, to compare its accuracy on iPads with standard response time software on high-speed computers. Then **Mark Makino** discusses the problems faced particularly by Japanese learners when faced with participial adjectives in English. After the articles, we are pleased to have a return of the *Word of Mouth* section, which is a place to share resources relating to vocabulary teaching or research. This time **Keith Barrs** introduces SkELL, a program that sketches out grammatical and collocational behavior of words from corpus data, and provides ideas for applications in the classroom.

We hope to see a lot of you at the 4th Annual Symposium on Vocabulary Learning and Testing in June, and are especially looking forward to new articles for Volume 4, Issue 2 of the VERB before the deadline of June 30th. Remember that poster presentation papers from the symposium are especially welcome!

The VERB editors
Magda Kitano & Stuart McLean

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*Short Papers***Building an app for cross-script priming experiments: A closer look at touchscreen timer accuracy**

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Background

Following the work of Dufau et al. (2011), who developed a smartphone app to perform lexical decision tasks (Rubenstein et al., 1970), Cameron (2014) developed and beta-tested an app called Cross-Prime to further explore the viability of personal touchscreen devices for psycholinguistic research. The app was designed to mimic the functionality of established response time software. The author used it to test Japanese-English bilinguals on iPads with the masked priming paradigm (Forster & Davis, 1984). Masked priming, similar to the lexical decision task, requires a participant to make a timed decision about a list of target words (e.g., Is it an English word? Yes/No) presented one at a time. The participant is largely unaware that a prime word is also being flashed prior to each target and that this prime may facilitate or inhibit target recognition speed. Certain kinds of bilingual prime-target pairs such as cognate translations have been widely observed to speed up decision times (De Groot and Nas, 1991) because of overlapping features in semantic, orthographic and phonological representations. This suggests an involuntary activation of the L2 by the L1 but leaves many questions about the lexical and sublexical processes involved. By isolating phonological representations from orthographic and semantic variables, recent studies of different script bilinguals further indicate that a bilingual's lexicons are integrated rather than separated.

Evidence for phonological effects from L1 primes on L2 targets (and in some cases L2 on L1) now includes studies with bilinguals of Hebrew-English (Gollan et al., 1997), Korean-English (Kim & Davis, 2003), Greek-French (Voga & Grainger, 2007), Chinese-English (Zhou et al., 2010), Greek-Spanish (Dimitropoulou et al., 2011); Russian-English (Jouravlev et al., 2014), and Japanese-English (Nakayama et al., 2012; Ando, E., Jared, D., Nakayama., & Hino, Y., 2014; Ando, E., Matsuki, K., Sheridan, H., & Jared, D., 2014). These findings support a nonselective view of visual word recognition, countering the original assumption of the Revised Hierarchical Model (RHM, Kroll & Stewart, 1994) that a bilingual's two lexicons are separate and that one language can be switched off at will. Rather, the L1 and L2 appear to be integrated so that the activation of one language entails the co-activation of the other. This view is consistent with the Bilingual Interactive Activation + (BIA+) model (Dijkstra & Van Heuven, 2002), which provides a workable connectionist framework with which to approach visual word recognition in bilinguals. Given the vast difference between the katakana syllabic script and English

alphabetic script, Ando et al. (2014) note, "Japanese-English bilinguals allow a particularly strong test of the BIA+ model's assumption of integrated representations" (pp.854).

In Nakayama et al. (2012), a study of high level Japanese-English bilinguals from which Cameron's (2014) Cross-Prime app experiment was adapted, one of three types of Japanese katakana primes preceded a randomized high frequency English target word list. The word SUPPORT, for example, was preceded by either a cognate translation prime (e.g. サポート/supporto - a prime with a large phonological and semantic relation to the English target); or by a phonologically related but semantically unrelated prime (e.g. リポート/reporto), or by an completely unrelated prime (e.g. オープン/open - no semantic or phonological relation). As expected, cognate primes showed the largest facilitation effect, due to lexical processing that was triggered by semantic representations and presumably also assisted by phonological features (see Gollan et al., 1997, for a study of cognate vs. noncognate translation priming effects). The next largest facilitation was observed in the phonological priming group, with the unrelated prime group providing a baseline for non-facilitation. The same pattern observed by Nakayama et al. (2012) was observed, however Cameron found the facilitation effect of phonological primes was considerably larger. This may have partly been a result of the study testing lower proficiency bilinguals, thus producing a larger L1 priming effect, however it was larger than would be expected from sublexical processing alone.

According to the assumptions of the BIA+ model, a different script prime cannot offer whole word (lexical) facilitation because only phonological features can pre-activate the target (semantic and orthographic overlap are absent). The time savings gained in target word recognition are therefore presumed to be serial and non-automatic so that the priming effect should not exceed the prime duration (of 50ms). A deeper description of these factors is beyond the scope of this paper, however previous evidence to support the sublexical assumption has been observed in a lack of phonological modulation by word frequency or proficiency. In the app beta-test a phonological priming effect of 95ms was reported with the 50ms prime, which would imply that phonology was modulated by proficiency. Given that the test was performed on a novel platform (touchscreen devices using an iPad app) it is more likely that a timer error occurred in the short prime duration stage and that the app prolonged exposure of the prime for up to 100ms instead of 50ms. This would account for the larger priming effect. Therefore, the purpose of the present study was to compare the accuracy of the app on iPads with the well-established method (Jiang, 2012, p. 62) of standard response time software installed on high-speed computers.

Aim

The aim of this study was to evaluate the timer accuracy of the Cross-Prime app by replicating the original experiment using standard response time software (Cedrus Superlab 5.0) on high-speed personal computers.

Sample

Sixty-two Japanese first year students studying English at a university in Japan, with TOEIC scores in the 350-400 range, participated. They were drawn from the same group of participants in the touchscreen study. Three months had elapsed between both studies, making a practice effect unlikely.

Methods

As this was a partial conceptual replication of Nakayama et al. (2012), the methodology and statistical procedures were followed as closely as possible. Participants were randomly grouped and tested on one of three masked-priming tasks. Sixty high frequency words (mean word length 4.6, orthographic neighbors 6.4) were taken from the HF list used in Nakayama et al. (2012), all occurring within the BNC 2K range (British National Corpus, 2007). These were presented randomly intermixed with sixty nonwords from the ARC Nonword Database (Rastle et al., 2002), matched in terms of length and number of neighbours.

Instructions were given in Japanese. Participants were instructed to answer, as quickly and accurately as possible, the same question upon presentation of each target item – “Is it an English word?” F was pressed to answer ‘No’. J was pressed to answer ‘Yes’. Tests were administered on MacBook Pros with ten practice trials. Three different kinds of prime-target pairs were used, with a Japanese katakana prime presented for 50ms prior to each English target word. The three Japanese primes were cognate translations (サポート/supporto); phonologically similar but conceptually unrelated (リポート/reporto); and phonologically and conceptually unrelated (オープン/open). The total time to perform the experiment was approximately ten minutes per person.

Results

Data from thirteen participants were removed due to high nonword error rates (above 20%), leaving forty-nine participants (three groups - eighteen, fifteen, and sixteen). Mean nonword errors across each group were very similar and averaged 17.5%. Mean word errors were also very similar across groups, averaging 4.2%. Outlying response times below 300ms or above 1700ms were replaced by these values (<2.0% or all word responses). A one-way ANOVA was performed on mean lexical decision latencies across the three prime conditions (cognate, phonological, unrelated). Subject and item analyses were also performed.

Translation (cognate) primes facilitated significantly quicker responses to target words compared with unrelated primes by a subject mean of 82ms ($p < .05$).

Phonological primes were, on average, 41ms faster than unrelated word primes, placing them roughly half way between the translation and unrelated prime types for mean response time. While the subject analysis did not achieve significance for the phonological priming effect relative to the translation or unrelated group, item analysis did achieve significance ($p < .05$), indicating a clear priming effect. Comparing data from the original Cross-Prime app study (please see Table 1 and Table 2), mean response times for the unrelated prime group were very similar in both experiments (820ms/819ms), suggesting that the app timer records millisecond latencies as accurately as standard computer software. Both studies produced quicker mean response times for cognates and phonological primes compared to the unrelated group (please see Figure 1 and Figure 2).

Table 1
App (Cross-Prime) mean response times and priming effects in milliseconds for HF English target words preceded by different Japanese Katakana prime types.

	Prime Type			Priming Effect	
	Translation (T)	Phonological (P)	Unrelated (UR)	Translation (UR-T)	Phonological (UR-P)
Mean RTs	651	725	820	169	95

Table 2
Computer based mean response times and priming effects in milliseconds for HF English target words preceded by different Japanese Katakana prime types.

	Prime Type			Priming Effect	
	Translation (T)	Phonological (P)	Unrelated (UR)	Translation (UR-T)	Phonological (UR-P)
Mean RTs	737	778	819	82	41

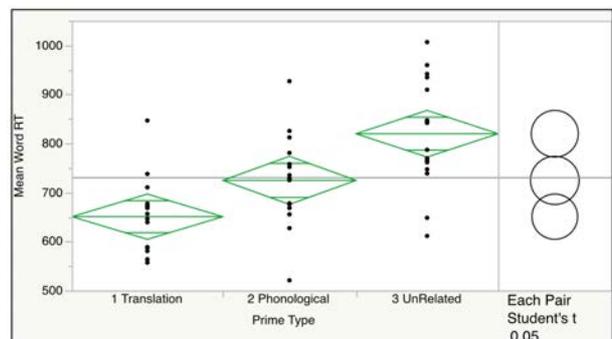


Figure 1. Mean response times per group for Test 1 (app)

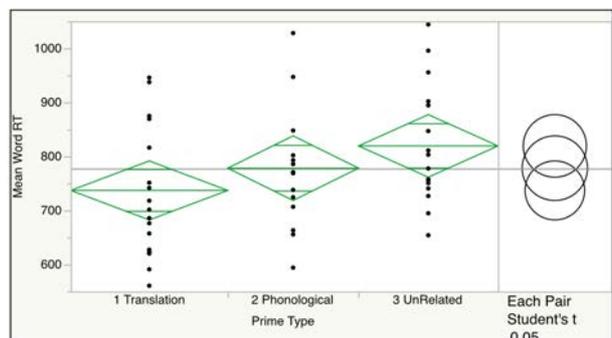


Figure 2. Mean response times per group for Test 2 (computer)

Conclusion

The priming pattern observed in both studies was very similar, confirming that the Cross-Prime app

successfully elicited a priming effect based on prime type. However, the mean cognate priming effect of 169ms recorded by the app was considerably larger than the 82ms achieved by the computer based procedure. The app also produced a mean phonological priming effect of 95ms whereas the computer measure yielded an effect of 41ms. This result was less than the 50ms prime and conforms to the assumption of the BIA+ model that phonological processing is sublexical in nature. While it is possible that the larger priming effects from the app are valid, it is more likely that the app was unable to sustain a true 50ms prime duration and that prime presentation was closer to 100ms, thus producing an exaggerated priming effect. This may be due to a timer error for extremely short presentation latencies (under 100ms) or due to an error when two items (prime, target) are presented less than 100ms apart.

As noted, the central timer of the Cross-Prime app appears to be otherwise accurate when recording non-primed latencies, as demonstrated by the similarity in mean response time between both unrelated prime groups. Millisecond responses appear to be recorded accurately but presentation sensitivity is lost with a 50ms prime. Therefore, while Cross-Prime appears to have a wide range of functionality it does not yet perfectly mimic standard response time software and masked priming experiments must be limited to prime durations above 100ms.

Future directions

Whether the insensitivity of the timer for short prime durations is a software or a hardware issue remains to be determined. Cross-Prime appears to be functionally stable for some data collection purposes but will not be ready for public release until further testing takes place.

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Ace’s poor guitar playing shocked me. (verb)
Naturally, the most common error is to replace one participial adjective with its partner:

I was interesting in the show.
The park was so amazed.

Notes on the Teaching of Participial Adjectives

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Introduction

Among the many issues surrounding the teaching of English adjectives to L2 English speakers, special frustration lies in the domain of the subclass called participial adjectives. A participial adjective is either a verb which has had one of its past or present participles, also called the -en and -ing forms (Chalker and Weiner, 1994), transformed into an adjective over time, or is simply an adjective which mimics conjugated verbs in appearance. These resemblances, along with sometimes-unpredictable semantic issues, represent significant obstacles to English competency among EFL and ESL students.

This article summarizes the issues in SLA presented by participial adjectives. The article also provides a brief summary of their coverage in popular textbooks. Finally, the article suggests methods based on SLA theory for teaching them in the classroom.

Verb participles and participial adjectives

Participial adjectives are likely to be confused with other types of words, such as conjugated verbs and other adjectives, depending on the contexts in which the words are found. Used attributively, participial adjectives with the -ing form can be confused with gerunds.

We rented a big moving van.
(removal van in the UK)
We heard a moving ballad on the radio.

Meanwhile, predicative participial adjectives are liable to be confused with verbs in the progressive aspect:

The drums were so exciting. (adjective)
The drums were exciting the dogs. (verb)

Or the passive voice:

I am quite scared of ghosts. (adjective)
I was scared by the sudden appearance of a ghost in the mirror. (verb)

Among beginning English learners, participial adjectives with the -en form are also likely to be confused with the simple past tense.

I was so shocked at the ticket prices for the reunion tour. (adjective)

For Japanese learners, participial adjectives present a few problems in particular. Concepts that are expressed as adjectives in English may be expressed as verbs in Japanese or vice versa, such as the common interjection, びっくりした [bikkuri shita], “I am surprised/That was surprising,” which is a verb in Japanese. Another phrase, 痛い [itai] “it hurts,” is an adjective in Japanese but a verb in English. Further, the verbs associated with emotions in Japanese, such as 興奮する [koufun suru] “to be excited,” place the experiencer of the emotions in the subject position, whereas in English it is the object of the verb “excite.” Translation into Japanese is likely to result in words of a different part of speech and conjugation than their English counterparts, possibly complicating rather than simplifying the path to understanding.

Treatment in ESL and EFL textbooks

A small sample of EFL student textbooks was examined for this article, including previous editions of the widely used *Interchange* series (Richards et al. 2005a and 2005b) and the *Side by Side* series (Bliss and Molinsky 2001, 2002a, and 2002b). These books fairly often use participial adjectives while introducing or demonstrating other grammar points, as in “I’m so excited! We have two weeks off! What are you going to do?” (Richards et al., 2005b, p. 30). *Interchange Third Edition: Student’s Book 2* (Richards et al., 2005b) is the sole textbook that explicitly treats the semantic difference between participial adjectives with -en and -ing forms and their origins as verbs. EFL/ESL textbooks generally address participial adjectives implicitly, introducing them alongside common collocations rather than as a separate point. The following section examines the rationales behind these choices and makes recommendations based on SLA theory.

Recommendations for methods of teaching participial adjectives

Explicit teaching is said to facilitate *noticing* (Schmidt, 1993; Ellis, 2005), leading to increased intake from input that includes the point being formally introduced. For this and other reasons, an explicit introduction of participial adjectives as a special class of lexis may be justified. First, these words are often a point of difficulty for learners (Folse, 2009), which shows that the learners are not receiving sufficient evidence for their correct usage from natural input. Moreover, their grammatical similarities to verbs and semantic similarities to each other mean that students who come across them in input are likely to make incorrect inferences.

An implicit approach, such as that used in the textbooks analyzed for this article, also may be justified. Collocations are extremely important for correctly and naturally using participial adjectives. If learners know nothing else about participial adjectives other than the fact that the -en forms frequently appear in sentences that begin with "I'm...", then these forms are unlikely to be misused. Further, as stated earlier, most students in Japan are, if anything, too accustomed to thinking of English by way of analogy to their L1 (Thompson, 2001). Because participial adjectives do not generally have one-to-one associations in Japanese, and their verb bases have key semantic differences with their common glosses in Japanese, Japanese learners given explicit grammatical instruction in participial adjectives are likely to make false inferences.

Therefore, it may be best to avoid the issue of the verb origin of participial adjectives even when introducing them explicitly, and also to avoid translation into Japanese. A combination of explaining the differences between -en and -ing form adjective pairs without reference to verbs and reinforcing the form with copious input may be a suitable strategy for helping learners overcome the difficulty of mastering these particular and particularly troublesome words.

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Word of Mouth

SkELL: A web-based programme for creating word sketches

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The Sketch Engine for Language Learning (SkELL: <http://skell.sketchengine.co.uk>) is a free, web-based tool for exploring words in the English language. It creates 'sketches' of the grammatical and collocational behaviour of words out of corpus data, which can help language learners, teachers, and researchers gain deeper insights into vocabulary usage in natural language. This article begins by discussing the development of SkELL from the larger Sketch Engine; a powerful corpus query system that houses tools to analyse corpora from a wide variety of languages. It then introduces the three primary functions of the SkELL tool, with examples of their application in the classroom for (1) making concordances, (2) investigating collocations, and (3) producing lists of similar words.

What is SkELL and how did it develop?

SkELL is a recent (2014) spin-off from the Sketch Engine, a powerful web-based corpus query system that, in addition to pre-installed corpora of over 65 languages,

includes the ability to make and/or store one's own corpus. Once a corpus has been selected, Sketch Engine has a range of functions that facilitate in-depth explorations of the linguistic data. The primary feature of the Sketch Engine is the 'word sketch', which allows users to investigate how words behave in a language. These word sketches are "one-page, automatic, corpus-derived summaries of a word's grammatical and collocational behaviour" (Kilgarriff, Rychly, Smrz, & Tugwell, 2004, p. 1). Other features include a concordancer, a distributional thesaurus, and 'sketch-diff', which visualises the usage differences between a pair of near-synonyms within the corpus. All of these functions are made possible with the background processing of the corpora, which involves applying a language-specific 'sketch grammar' to the data in order to explicitly show the grammatical relations in which the words participate. This allows the end user to produce a standard concordance of the search term, but also to see how the word behaves in a wide range of grammatical relationships. The Sketch Engine offers a 30-day free trial and then works on a subscription basis, with prices depending on the type and length of the subscription.

SkELL is a stripped down version of the Sketch Engine. Introduced in late 2014, it is free, web-based, supported on mobile/touch devices, and involves no sign-up or login process. Currently it is only for English, with more languages possible after the creation of suitable corpora (Baisa & Suchomel, 2014). It includes three of the primary Sketch Engine functions: concordancing, making word sketches, and producing lists of similar words. Behind the web-based interface is a corpus of over 1 billion words, specifically gathered and processed for the tool (which is available for direct access from within the Sketch Engine). It is composed of 500 million words from Wikipedia articles, 200 million words from Project Gutenberg texts, 500 million words from the enTenTen14 web corpus, 105 million words from the WebBootCat corpus, the entire British National Corpus of around 112 million words, and 200 million words from other sources (Baisa & Suchomel, 2014, p. 68). The corpus was processed into around 60 million sentences and scored with a GDEX tool to rank ‘good dictionary examples’ of sentences. This GDEX tool was designed to bring to the forefront the most appropriate examples of sentences for the search entry, making the tool more useful for lexicographers, language learners, and teachers (Kilgariff, Husák, McAdam, Rundell, & Rychlý, 2008).

Concordancing in SkELL

The tool gives the user 40 example sentences using the search term. Compared to the full Sketch Engine, this function in SkELL is limited. It is not currently possible to isolate the part of speech, specify the search term as a word or lemma, or search by regular expression. But as a free, rapid, and simple way of searching for how a word or phrase is used within a large corpus, this is a very useful function for language learners and teachers. For example, target words can be

presented in the form of concordance lines to help students develop the skill of guessing from context. Figure 1 shows the first 15 lines of the search term *chav*. Without any previous knowledge of this word, it could be guessed from its lexical context (silly, dirty redneck, fan, culture, gobby, character, city) that it is a derogatory term for a particular type of person or place.



Figure 1. Concordance lines of the search term *chav*.

Producing Word Sketches in SkELL

A ‘word sketch’ allows a more intricate profile to be built of the search term in its context, revealed through its common collocations and grammatical behaviour. The sketch grammar used to generate the sketch in SkELL is a reduced form of the one used in the full Sketch Engine, allowing a simple and compact profile of the word to be presented, which is particularly useful for classroom use. For example, Figure 2 shows the word sketch for *coffee*. It separates the collocations into six grammatical relations; clicking on each collocate takes the user to the concordance lines for the two words within that grammatical relation. Besides the expected collocations, which are the ones likely to be listed in a dictionary or thesaurus, the word sketch often brings up unexpected collocations and students can be



Figure 2. A word sketch of the search term ‘coffee’.



4th ^{JALT} **VOCAB SIG**
Annual Symposium
on Vocabulary Learning
and Testing

Photo by Paul Freeborn

June 20, 2015
Kyushu Sangyo University
Fukuoka, Japan

Session 1: Testing

Discussant

Rie Koizumi
Juntendo University

Speakers

Kurtis McDonald & Mayumi Asaba
Kobe College, Kwansei Gakuin University
Stuart McLean, Brandon Kramer & Jeffrey Stewart
Kansai U., Momoyama U., Kyushu Sangyo U.
Tim Stoeckel & Phil Bennett
Miyazaki International College
Hye Won Shin
Teachers College of Columbia University

Session 2: Learning

Discussant

Stuart Webb
Western University

Speakers

Anna C S Chang
Hsing-Wu University
Andrew Gallacher & Charles J. Anderson
Kyushu Sangyo University
Yuko Hoshino
Tokyo Fuji University
Tatsuya Nakata
Kansai University

jaltvocab.weebly.com/symposium



SIG News



2015 JALT Vocabulary SIG Symposium - Call for Posters

In order to ensure a strong audience, no sessions will run concurrent to poster presentations. Proposals for poster presentations will be accepted under two general categories:

1. Ongoing vocabulary related research
2. Vocabulary teaching and learning in practice

Submission: Please e-mail 1) your name, 2) presentation title, and 3) a brief outline of your proposed topic (not exceeding 300 words), to <jaltvocab[at]gmail.com>

Structured formats for poster presentation proposals:

Ongoing research format:

- Background
- Aims
- Methods
- Sample
- Preliminary results

Teaching and learning in practice:

- Theoretical framework
- Sample population
- Procedure
- Preliminary results
- Preliminary conclusions

Deadline: April 30th, 2015

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Accepted poster presenters will be invited to submit written synopses of their presentation for publication in VERB 4(2), which is scheduled to be published in Fall

**VLI Submission  
Deadline**

## CALL FOR PAPERS for Vocabulary Learning & Instruction

The Vocabulary SIG's *Vocabulary Learning and Instruction* (VLI) journal is calling for submissions for an upcoming issue. Submissions will be published online upon acceptance, and combined into an issue later this year.

VLI accepts long-form research papers (2000-7000 words) and brief reports, summaries and commentaries (2000-3000 words) related to vocabulary acquisition, pedagogy, assessment and lexical networks.

As an open journal, content is indexed on Google Scholar and made freely available on the internet without paywalls. Authors are free to also make their work available on sites such as academia.edu and researchgate.

All submissions are subject to a 2-step peer-review process:

A) Editors review manuscripts to ensure basic requirements are met, and that the work is of sufficient quality to merit external review. This process typically takes 1-2 weeks, at which point authors are informed of the outcome.

B) Submissions which meet these requirements are sent out for blind peer review by 2-3 experts in the field. This process takes approximately 1-2 months. Following external review, authors are sent copies of external reviewers' comments and notified of decisions (*accept, accept pending changes, revise and resubmit, or reject*).

Please see <http://vli-journal.org/submissions.html> for details.

## VERB Submission Information

### Short Papers

- Contributions to Short papers and Word of Mouth sections must not exceed 1000 words, excluding references and titles. They are expected to adhere to APA 6th edition formatting guidelines. All submissions will undergo peer review, and may require rewriting and resubmission for acceptance.

### Event Info

- If you know of a vocabulary-related event, or if you are planning to organize an event, let us know so we can get the word out for you!

**Please send submissions to:**  
**[jaltvocabsig.verb@gmail.com](mailto:jaltvocabsig.verb@gmail.com)**

For more information: <http://jaltvocab.weebly.com>

The JALT Vocabulary SIG would like to thank members for their support.